

**DISCLAIMER: This document contains the Whatcom County Council or Committee minutes, as approved. However, unless an attested signature page is attached, they are not the final approved minutes.**

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WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
**Finance and Administrative Services Committee**

November 9, 2004

Committee Chair Sam Crawford called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. in the Council Chambers, 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, Washington.

Present:

Dan McShane

Sharon Roy

Absent:

None

Also Present:

None

**COMMITTEE DISCUSSION**

**1. UPDATE ON VARIOUS BRIDGE LOAD RESTRICTIONS (AB2004-335A)**

Joe Rutan, County Road Engineer, stated this update is on recent information on bridge loading. Information about load restrictions will go to trucking companies, school districts, and industries. He submitted a memo and map (*on file*) and explained the map of bridges in the County.

Roy asked if the list of six high priority bridges that were ranked in order of importance for repair or replacement is related to the weight restrictions. Rutan stated it is. This is a preliminary ranking. They have to put together financial plans for further direction. They looked at effects of load restrictions on certain routes. Smith Road is a highly traveled route. The bridge is a narrow point on Smith Road. The abutments are not in great conditions. They can put in new girders, but the bridge would still be narrow. Abutments have shorter life span than girders. It would limit their ability to get federal funding. When they do construction, the road will be closed for a number of months. At that point, the Kelly Road bridge becomes an issue. They have difficult decisions to make based on haul routes, transportation, ability to do this, and financial obligations. They have counters getting information on types of trucks and volume. They will have to repair some bridges to replace girders. They are putting together a contract for girders.

Crawford asked how outreach will occur. Rutan stated he has a list. Staff will work with people on the list to plan other routes or reconfigure vehicles. Information will also be on the website. Staff is developing a means to get an interactive map on the website.

Crawford asked if there are any hay farmers who operate their own trucks. Rutan stated there are. Staff will do their best to reach out to all the people who

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1 may be impacted. He hopes people in the industry will get the word out and that  
2 people will call when they see the sign.  
3

4 Roy stated they are gathering data on the bridge use now. It sounds  
5 complicated. Rutan stated he had concerns about the girders, so they did the load  
6 ratings on half the bridges in the county. They will do load ratings on the other half  
7 in the future. He hopes they identified all the troublesome bridges in the first half.  
8  
9

### 10 **COUNCIL "CONSENT AGENDA" ITEM**

#### 11

#### 12 **1. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A**

#### 13 **SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND HEALTH**

#### 14 **PROMOTION NETWORK FOR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

#### 15 **(EAP) SERVICES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$3.95 PER EMPLOYEE PER**

#### 16 **MONTH FOR EAP SERVICES, AND \$200 PER HOUR FOR TRAINING**

#### 17 **(AB2004-380)**

#### 18

19 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, stated this is a very valuable service.  
20 The administration and Human Resources Division recommend continuation of the  
21 program.  
22

23 Crawford stated this is a small line item, but the cost seems to inflate a lot.  
24 Desler stated the cost inflates because many employees use the service. The  
25 service has solved some complicated and difficult personal problems.  
26

27 Roy asked if the contract reduces employee visits from one to six to one to  
28 three.  
29

30 Karen Goens, Human Resources Division Manager, stated the first bid was  
31 \$4.25 per employee, per month. That bid is a lot higher. Most employees are not  
32 going in for six visits. They propose to try allowing one to three visits per issue for  
33 a year rather than go with an untried company. The County got a very  
34 advantageous deal.  
35

36 Roy stated these programs save the County money in the long term. She  
37 asked if employees could pool resources. Goens stated they cannot, but if an issue  
38 is a long-term issue, the employee is referred to a mental health counselor. Also,  
39 the contract allows one to three visits per issue. An employee can have an  
40 unlimited number of issues per year. In addition, the medical plan provides for  
41 mental health services.  
42

43 ***Roy moved*** to recommend approval to the full Council.

44  
45 ***Motion carried 2-0 with McShane out of the room.***  
46

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1    **2.    REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A**  
2    **PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONTRACT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY**  
3    **AND ST. JOSEPH HOSPITAL FOR OUTPATIENT SUBSTANCE ABUSE**  
4    **SERVICES, IN A VARIABLE AMOUNT DEPENDING UPON COUNTY PRE-**  
5    **AUTHORIZATIONS (AB2004-381)**  
6

7           Terry Hinz, Assistant Director, stated this item is the result of the request for  
8 proposals for treatment services. The contract is unchanged from last year.

9  
10        **Roy moved** to recommend approval to the full Council.

11  
12        **Motion carried unanimously.**  
13

14    **3.    REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A**  
15    **JOINT FUNDING AGREEMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND**  
16    **UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY FOR STREAM FLOW GAGE**  
17    **NETWORK MAINTENANCE FOR EARLY FLOOD WARNING PROGRAM,**  
18    **IN THE AMOUNT OF \$48,160 FOR THE COUNTY SHARE, FOR A TOTAL**  
19    **PROJECT COST OF \$59,480 (AB2004-382)**  
20

21           Paula Cooper, River and Flood Division Manager, stated this is the annual  
22 funding agreement with U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to do gauge maintenance.  
23 There is a significant cost increase to the County. The Army Corps of Engineers  
24 decided not to participate this year. The County has the capacity for the increased  
25 cost in the budget.

26  
27        **McShane moved** to recommend approval to the full Council.

28  
29        **Motion carried unanimously.**  
30

31    **4.    REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO AN**  
32    **AMENDMENT TO THE EXISTING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**  
33    **AGREEMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND WALKER AND**  
34    **ASSOCIATES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOPOGRAPHIC MAPPING OF**  
35    **THE NORTH FORK, SOUTH FORK, MIDDLE FORK, AND MAINSTREAM**  
36    **OF THE NOOKSACK RIVER, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$21,987, FOR A**  
37    **TOTAL AMENDED AMOUNT OF \$126,212 (AB2004-383)**  
38

39           Paula Cooper, River and Flood Division, stated the amendment amount is  
40 \$104,225, not \$21,987. The total amended amount shown for the contract is  
41 correct. This agreement will develop topographical mapping. They use this  
42 topographical mapping for many things.

43  
44           Crawford asked if there is public access to this information. Cooper stated  
45 there is. It's not on the website yet, but staff burns CD's often.  
46

1 McShane asked the resolution on the maps. Cooper stated the resolution is  
2 one inch equals 200, two-foot contour interval.

3  
4 McShane asked how accurate the data is. Cooper stated that with two-foot  
5 contour interval, the variance is plus or minus a half-foot. The specs are in the  
6 documents in the Council packet. It is the standard they've done for the last  
7 decade.

8  
9 **Roy moved** to recommend approval with the correct amount to the full  
10 Council.

11  
12 **Motion carried unanimously.**

13  
14 **5. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO AWARD BID #04-**  
15 **72 TO THE ONLY BIDDER, EQUIPMENT SALES CO., INC. FOR A**  
16 **SURFACE MOUNTED TRUCK HOIST, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$82,844.09**  
17 **(AB2004-384)**

18  
19 Eric Schlehuber, Senior Accountant, stated the purpose of a surface mounted  
20 truck hoist is so they don't have to use portable rolling jack stands to lift the dump  
21 trucks. This is for in the shop during maintenance. The primary purpose for the  
22 purchase is safety and efficiency in the shop area. They will put it in one of the  
23 bays. It is a drive-through unit, so it will not take up the entire bay. This was  
24 budgeted as an additional services request (ASR) in the 2004 budget.

25  
26 **Roy moved** to recommend approval to the full Council.

27  
28 **Motion carried unanimously.**

29  
30 **6. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A**  
31 **LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY (PARKS &**  
32 **RECREATION) AND DEBORAH HIGHLEY FOR THE OPERATION OF A**  
33 **PUBLIC EQUESTRIAN FACILITY AT SUNSET FARM, IN THE AMOUNT**  
34 **OF \$800 PER MONTH (AB2004-385)**

35  
36 Mike McFarlane, Parks and Recreation Department Director, stated this  
37 contract is for a contractor to operate the facility. In addition, the contractor has  
38 its own operation at the facility. This is a cost effective way to get supervision and  
39 oversight without hiring an employee. The facility is in a transition and growth  
40 stage. The contract is for renting the house and allowing the contractor to use the  
41 barn to board horses. In addition, the contractor supervises the site and  
42 coordinates programs.

43  
44 Crawford asked about this facility. McFarlane stated the facility has a small  
45 riding ring. They are developing a larger ring. People bring their horses to the  
46 facility. There is the potential of boarding horses privately through the contractor.  
47 The County wouldn't board horses because of the cost and labor involved.

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1  
2 Crawford asked how long this facility has existed and how many citizens use  
3 it. McFarlane stated the facility is used regularly by some certain riding groups.  
4 Different riding groups use different areas. A volunteer corps put up the riding  
5 ring. This will be the third contractor on this site.  
6

7 Roy asked if the contractor pays the County \$800 per month. McFarlane  
8 stated the contractor does, for renting the house for \$800.  
9

10 Roy stated it seems like a good deal. McFarlane stated it is.  
11

12 **Roy moved** to recommend approval to the full Council.  
13

14 **Motion carried unanimously.**  
15

16 **7. RESOLUTION TO SET HEARING TO SELL TAX-TITLE PROPERTY BY**  
17 **NEGOTIATION, REQ. #08-04 (AB2004-386)**  
18

19 **McShane moved** to recommend approval to the full Council.  
20

21 **Motion carried unanimously.**  
22  
23

24 **OTHER BUSINESS**  
25

26 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, submitted information on the  
27 **ordinance adopting the Whatcom County 2005-2006 Budget (AB2004-**  
28 **027B)** technical corrections. The actual figures in the Council packet include the  
29 adjustments proposed as technical corrections.  
30

31 Crawford asked about the Charter Review facilitation expenses. Desler  
32 stated the Council said to increase funding for that item by \$10,000, to a total of  
33 \$16,000. It looks like Mick Moynihan will be the initial chair of the commission. He  
34 wants to do this for the least possible cost. The amount spent may end up being  
35 less than the budgeted amount.  
36

37 Crawford asked about the land use floater position. Desler stated the  
38 administration proposes to take the plans examiner position for 2006 and begin it  
39 in 2005 instead.  
40

41 The Council approved the Depot Market Square grant and the Delta Line  
42 grant, so administration added that money to the budget.  
43

44 There is a memo from the Public Defender's Office that said he will ask for  
45 more staff. The memo said that adding staffing to the Prosecutor's Office means  
46 they must add staff to the Public Defender's Office. They find that if they do  
47 something for one office, the other office wants the same and more. They won't

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1 ever achieve a balance. The number of filings and cases will always grow. There is  
2 no easy way to contain the growth. The courts are staff-dependant. If they are  
3 going to add capacity in the justice system, they have to reduce capacity  
4 elsewhere.

5  
6 Roy stated that if the County is in jeopardy of losing State support because  
7 of the caseloads. Desler stated the Public Defender says to the judge that he  
8 cannot ethically represent his clients. The County will have to find another way to  
9 represent these people or dismiss the case. So far, the system uses conflict  
10 counsel. He's working on getting a larger appropriation to counties for public  
11 defender services. Washington State is the only state that doesn't provide funding  
12 for public defender services and is the lowest for funding courts of general  
13 jurisdiction. It is a high priority for the State legislature. Many people are coming  
14 together to address this problem. Whatcom County has one of the better public  
15 defender systems in the state. Other counties are starting to look to Whatcom  
16 County to set the standard. This budget does add staff to the Public Defender's  
17 Office. The two directors of the Public Defender's Office and the Prosecutor's Office  
18 are top notch.

19  
20 Crawford stated he talked to Judge Ross, who expressed the more pressing  
21 need to have more prosecutors rather than public defenders. Judge Ross felt  
22 strongly that the lack of prosecutors prevents the County from processing a lot of  
23 cases. That is an anecdote of one person's view.

24  
25 Desler stated there was an issue of lobbying in Olympia. The Executive feels  
26 that the County could devote more resources from the existing Executive and  
27 Council budget to talk with legislators rather than have a high visibility paid staff  
28 person.

29  
30 Roy stated the issue isn't money, it's time.

31  
32 Crawford asked how Executive Kremen suggests the councilmembers be  
33 more involved. They can't even find time to get to Washington State Association of  
34 Counties (WSAC) meetings.

35  
36 Desler stated they're still grappling with emergency medical service (EMS)  
37 issues.

38  
39 Crawford asked if the administration can fund Ski to Sea with a receipt-based  
40 accounting method. Desler stated it can. The County can require that it see that  
41 documentation before paying bills.

42  
43 Crawford stated his vote to approve that item is contingent upon that  
44 procedure.

45  
46 Roy stated she doesn't agree with the procedure and funding the Chamber.  
47

1 Crawford stated he is in favor of funding Ski to Sea, not the Chamber.  
2

3 McShane stated the Council could earmark money to potentially spend on  
4 lobbying in Olympia. Whatcom County has had no participation in WSAC setting its  
5 legislative priorities.  
6

7 Roy asked if the idea is for the Council to hire someone to represent it in  
8 Olympia.  
9

10 McShane stated that is his idea. He hasn't discussed it with anyone yet.  
11 He's interested to hear what people have to say about that idea.  
12

13 Desler stated there are people who do lobbying on a part-time basis. It can  
14 be successful to pick one or two days to have the Council and Executive spend a  
15 day with legislators in the heat of the legislative session. If the Council wants to  
16 add this expenditure, it should reduce an expenditure elsewhere.  
17

18 The Executive is working on EMS issues. The County budgeted \$1.322  
19 million. It is also doing analysis of startup costs, which are expensive. He'll be  
20 talking with the Council on EMS issues in the coming weeks. He's working with a  
21 group that includes mayors, fire commissioners, and fire chiefs.  
22

23 Roy stated she received an email from someone who said the County is  
24 planning to go with volunteers as opposed to trained emergency medical  
25 technicians (EMT's). That isn't true. That isn't an option. Desler stated the  
26 community is provided basic life support (BLS) and advanced life support (ALS).  
27 There are two paramedics to every single aid call. It could be that BLS response  
28 would be from volunteer EMT's.  
29

30 Crawford stated the first responders in the rural county are generally  
31 volunteers. However, due to a standard of care defined by the operator of the  
32 current system, which is the Bellingham Fire Department, the ability of those folks  
33 is limited. Those volunteers are able to do a certain amount of things. At that  
34 point, the full-fledged EMT/paramedic would arrive for ALS and transport.  
35 Volunteers want to participate in the training to do more ALS, but were shut out of  
36 that system.  
37

38 *(Clerk's Note: End of tape one, side A.)*  
39

40 Crawford stated he had a problem with that shut out. He wants to empower  
41 the fire districts and volunteers. Allow folks to get training and certification. That  
42 will provide a broader spectrum of people in the community to be available. He has  
43 not yet heard a convincing argument to prevent those folks from getting training.  
44

45 Roy stated she heard a complaint that a volunteer who is also a nurse wasn't  
46 allowed to provide any level of care, even though that nurse had the training.  
47

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1 Desler stated the administration is committed to creating a high-quality EMS  
2 system. There is a lot of work to do.  
3

4 Crawford stated Executive Kremen assured him that the What-Comm budget,  
5 which the Board of Directors unanimously approved, is in the current proposed  
6 budget from the Executive. Medic One's participation was increased by a certain  
7 amount, but he noted to the board that the County budgeted the same amount for  
8 Medic One as last year. Therefore, if there is an increase, Whatcom County had not  
9 anticipated it. The amount that was recommended was the amount in the  
10 proposed budget. The amount Medic One was going to pay was more, but the  
11 County wasn't paying more for Medic One. Desler stated the proposed budget  
12 allows that special staffing arrangement to go forward. The City of Bellingham will  
13 establish a separate Medic One system for Bellingham. In addition, the City will  
14 participate in Whatcom Medic One. The fire department is making adjustments to  
15 the What-Comm budget, staff, and equipment as if it were going to implement a  
16 separate Bellingham Medic One.  
17

18 McShane asked if they have budgeted for a certain expenditure, but it may  
19 not be that much. Desler stated the County budgeted the same amount as last  
20 year, which is \$1.322 million, for the next two years. However, the County's cost  
21 may not be as high because the City is setting up a separate system for  
22 Bellingham. The County planned on recommending adjustments, but they don't  
23 know yet what those will be.  
24

25 Roy asked if the Medic One response would be the same in the county for the  
26 next two years as it has been in the past. Desler stated that is correct.  
27

28 Roy asked if a plan is to split the two, and have Bellingham medic units and  
29 County medic units. Desler stated that is the plan in two years.  
30

31  
32 **ADJOURN**

33  
34 The meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.  
35  
36  
37

38 \_\_\_\_\_  
39 Jill Nixon, Minutes Transcription  
40

41 ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

42  
43  
44  
45  
46 \_\_\_\_\_  
47 Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_ Sam Crawford, Committee Chair